

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

May 2003

Work continues on the process of updating the Folsom Lake SRA General Plan/Resource Management Plan (RMP). This project, which is a partnership between the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation, will result in a single and cohesive management document for the SRA that will guide the future protection of natural and cultural resources and the development of public use facilities. This newsletter is the second of six newsletters planned to keep you updated throughout the planning process and is intended to summarize the findings of the recently-completed Resource Inventory.

Resource Inventory Now Complete

The final Resource Inventory of the SRA was recently completed by the planning team. Planners, scientists, and other technical experts worked for several months to document information related to the park and vicinity that will provide the context for subsequent park planning decisions. Topics addressed in the document include: environmental conditions; natural resources; recreation, scenic, and cultural resources; and land use, traffic/circulation, and utilities. For each topic, key recommendations and issues are identified. Although the document is complete, it represents a work-in-progress and will be updated as new information becomes available. The final Resource Inventory will be posted on the Folsom Lake SRA Website in early May. The following outlines the contents of the Resource Inventory.

Geology

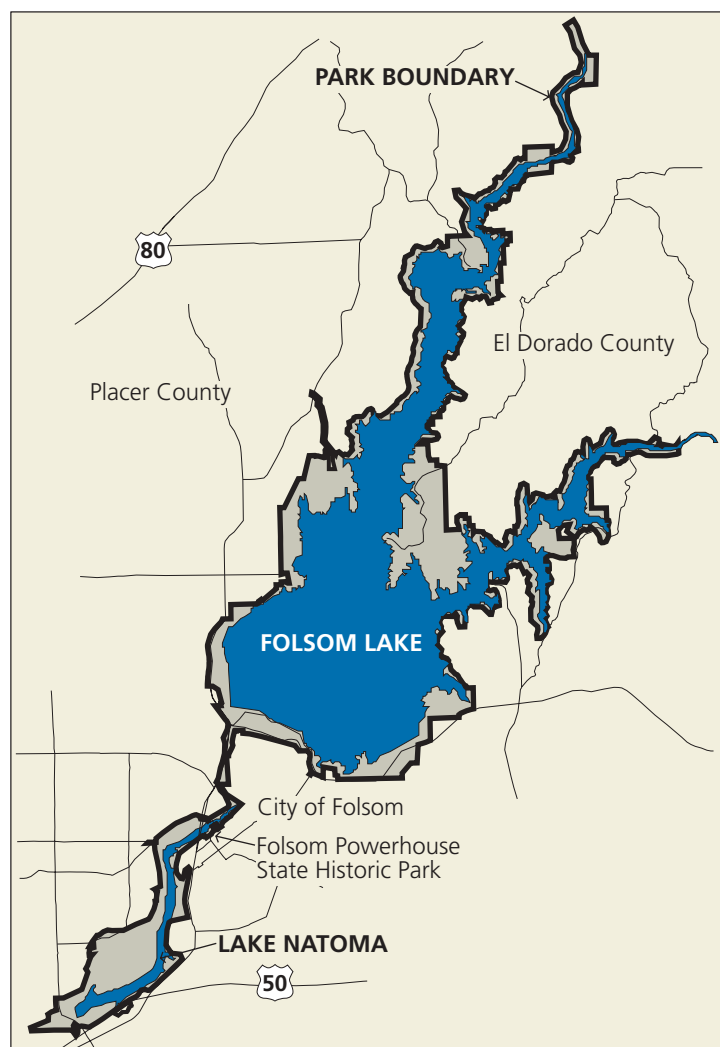
This section documents and maps the geologic conditions of the park and the vicinity, including geologic formations and rock types, mineral resources, geologic faults and other hazards, significant physical features, and topography. This analysis is important in identifying geologic constraints to future park development as well potential interpretive opportunities.

Soils

Soils information is summarized and mapped for the park and the vicinity based on U.S. Department of Agriculture soil surveys of Placer, El Dorado, and Sacramento counties. Soil characteristics that could have a bearing on park planning are noted.

Hydrology

This section describes the American River Watershed and the role of the lakes and dams in the park with respect to flood control, water supply, and power generation. Since water levels in Folsom Lake have a direct impact on recreation activities, this



section summarizes the major water diversions in the watershed and describes the key elements and possible impacts of the Folsom Dam Modification and Folsom Dam Raise projects.

Water Quality

The key factors affecting water quality in the park and the results of water quality sampling by various agencies are summarized in this section. In addition, the relative quality of water in the park is described in relation to the objectives for the entire watershed as specified in the Basin Plan for the Central Valley Region.

Noise

The existing noise conditions in the park are characterized in this section based on ambient noise monitoring conducted in September 2002 at ten locations around the park. In addition, the various noise policies, standards and regulations of the surrounding counties and the City of Folsom are summarized.

PHASE I: June 2002 to August 2002

PROJECT INITIATION

- * Project Initiation
- * Site Reconnaissance and Data Collection
- * Base Map Preparation/Develop GIS Format and Protocols
- * Stakeholder Identification
- * Establish Project Web Page

PHASE II: September 2002 to April 2003

UNDERSTANDING THE SITE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

- * Stakeholders/Focus Group Meetings
- * Draft Resource Inventory -- Existing Conditions
- * **Public Workshop #1--Issues and Opportunities (November '02)**
- * Newsletter #1
- * Final Resource Inventory
- * Newsletter #2

Plant Life

This section describes the vegetation resources in the park based on comprehensive document review, aerial photo interpretation, and intensive field mapping and ground surveys to verify background data. Detailed vegetation communities are described and mapped, as are special status species and invasive non-native species, to aid in future habitat management in the park.

Animal Life

This section describes and maps the terrestrial and aquatic wildlife resources in the park based on comprehensive document review, interviews with local experts, and field assessments on habitat conditions and use by wildlife. The known locations of special status species are mapped in this section, as are the habitat areas suitable for supporting such species. Wildlife corridors in the park are identified and the fisheries of Folsom Lake and Lake Natoma described.

Recreation Resources

The recreation resources in the park attracted more than 1.5 million visitors in 2000. This section of the Resource Inventory summarizes visitor attendance and how visitors use the park. Both the aquatic and terrestrial recreation facilities and activities in the park are described, including the marina, boat ramps, campgrounds, day use areas, trails, and so on. Other recreation resources in the area are briefly summarized as a means identifying the regional recreation role of the park.

Scenic Resources

This section summarizes the scenic views, landscape features, and distinctive built features of the park. A discussion of various elements that detract from the scenic resources and visual quality of the park, such as visual intrusion from urban development, is also included. Threats to scenic resources are identified.

Cultural Resources

There are many archeological and historical resources that are known or have potential to exist in the park. These resources are described in this section, which also includes a summary of the archaeological and historical setting of the area. A sensitivity analysis is included as a means of determining which areas of the park are more likely to contain cultural resources than others. This analysis is important in identifying cultural constraints to future park development and potential interpretive opportunities.

Land Use

The recreation-related land uses in the park and the impacts on these uses by non-recreation activities are summarized in this section. Non-recreation activities relate to the operation of the lakes in the park for the purposes of flood control, water supply, and power generation. The characteristics and trends of land use surrounding the park are described, as is the interface between the park and these lands. Finally, the relevant land use plans and policies of local jurisdictions and agencies as they relate to the park are outlined.

Traffic/Circulation

This section of the Resource Inventory describes the existing traffic/circulation system--including public transportation and bicycle facilities--in the area of the park as well as the current traffic conditions on roadways that provide direct access to the park. Circulation within the park is summarized and approved transportation improvements that could affect future circulation and access to the park are described.

Utilities

The park is served by a variety of public utilities, including water, sewer, electricity, and telephone. The infrastructure in the park associated with these utilities is described in this section, as are the utility easements through the park.



PHASE III: April to September 2003

DEFINING THE VISION

- * Resource Summary/Statement of Park Purpose and Vision
- * Develop Alternatives
- * Newsletter #3
- * **Public Workshop #2--Exploring Alternatives (June '03)**
- * Newsletter #4
- * Develop Preferred Park Concept

PHASE IV: September 2003 to Nov. 2004

GENERAL PLAN/RMP

- * Preliminary General Plan/RMP
- * Newsletter #5
- * **Public Workshop #3--Preliminary GP/RMP (June '04)**
- * Newsletter #6
- * Public Review Period and Hearing on GP/RMP DEIR/EIS
- * Commission Adoption/Certification Hearing (November '04)

Key Findings

The planning team has identified a range of issues to be addressed in the update of the Folsom Lake SRA General Plan, based on the synthesis of data collected for the final Resource Inventory and the input received thus far from various stakeholders and members of the public. Some of these issues include:

- The proposed Folsom Dam Raise project will increase the maximum possible flood pool elevation of Folsom Lake to 482 feet. If the dam raise project proceeds, will the recreation facilities on Folsom Lake that were built assuming a maximum flood pool of 466 feet need to be relocated or adapted to address possible short term flooding?
- Certain areas of park, such as Mississippi Bar, Willow Creek, and Observation Point, will be impacted during construction of the proposed Folsom Dam Raise project. What are the long term recreation and natural resource goals for these areas?
- Folsom Lake Marina currently has a years-long waiting list for slip rentals. Should the current facility be expanded and/or an additional marina facility constructed? If so, what are the best locations for such a facility?
- Certain boat launch facilities, such as Folsom Point, Granite Bay, and Brown's Ravine, reach capacity at peak times. Should current facilities be expanded and/or new facilities constructed to improve water access and reduce traffic delays?
- A comprehensive trails master plan should be prepared to identify type and location of new and expanded facilities, connections to other systems, allowed uses, and management issues such as user education, safety, and enforcement. What changes should be made to the existing trail system?
- Camping and picnic facilities in the park reach capacity at peak times. Should current facilities be expanded and/or new facilities constructed to increase capacity? Should new forms of camping, such as boat-in and horse-in be pursued?

- The proximity of urban and rural development to the park raises a host of issues, including wildfire risk, increased stormwater runoff, encroachments and access, etc. What policies and direction are needed to address these issues?
- Douglas Boulevard and Folsom-Auburn Road are congested by recreation traffic at peak times. What are the most suitable solutions for alleviating this congestion?
- The park does not currently have a formal visitor center. Should a park visitor center be developed to inform, educate, and guide park users? If so, what are the best locations for such a facility?
- What steps are needed to document, protect, enhance, and interpret natural and cultural resources in the park?
- Off-road vehicle use is resulting in damage to vegetation and erosion in shoreline areas. What policies and direction are needed to address this issue?
- Water quality is a concern in the park. What policies and direction are needed to ensure the ongoing protection of water contact recreation users.
- What are the priorities for land acquisition by State Parks for the purposes of natural and scenic resource protection and the provision of additional recreation opportunities?

Next Steps

As shown in the project timeline above, Phase II is now complete and work on Phase III has begun. Phase III will include the development of alternatives for analysis and public consideration and input.

You are invited to attend a public workshop on the draft alternatives on June 10, 2003, 7:00pm to 9:30pm, at Folsom Middle School Auditorium, 500 Blue Ravine Road, Folsom, CA 95630.



We Want to Hear From You!

There will be other opportunities for public input throughout the planning process. If you are not currently on our mailing list, or if you would like further information, there are several ways you can contact us:

Mail

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1328 Mission Street, 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

E-Mail

folsomlakeplanupdate@sf.wrtdesign.com

Phone

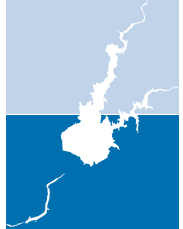
Jim Micheals
State Parks Gold Fields District
(916) 988-9116 ext. 202

Web

You can also visit the State Parks web site for the latest information on the General Plan Update at www.parks.ca.gov and clicking on "General Plans" under "Related Links."



FOLSOM LAKE/NATOMA



FOLSOM LAKE SRA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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